

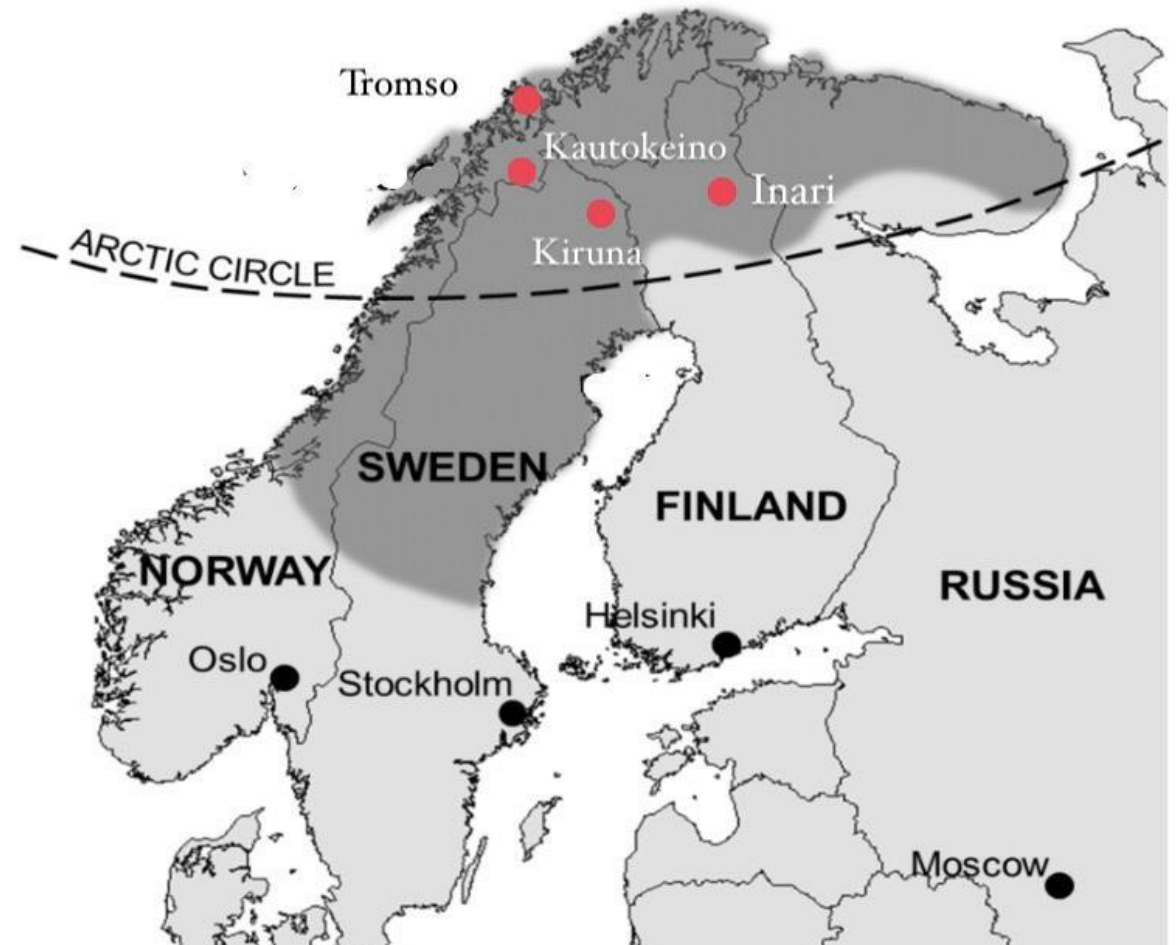


*Navigating Arctic Complexity: A
Decade-Long Exploration of Sámi-
EU Relations in the European Arctic.*

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A project about the impact of EU Policies on Sámi communities in Sápmi regions in Norway, Sweden and Finland

- Two types of international actors, the EU -and the Sámi
- It aims precisely at studying cross-border interactions among the Sámi communities across different EU member states in the Arctic.
- To provide an integrated understanding of the **interplay between Indigenous Peoples and EU policies in the strategic region of the Arctic.**
- A **mixed-methods approach - qualitative and quantitative data:** Field missions, interviews and focus group discussions combined with EU Policy Implementation Metrics, Socio-Economic Indicators, Survey Data and Public Opinion Statistics.
- To sufficiently analyze the implications of chosen EU environmental policies on Sámi livelihoods (mining, wind power expansion), emphasizing the possible integration of indigenous rights and conservation objectives. To investigate the implications of these policies on Sámi livelihoods, documenting potential instances of conflicts or discrimination and marginalization.



2021 - STRONGER ENGAGEMENT FOR A STRONGER ARCTIC

On October 2021, the EU's Arctic Policy was updated with the publication of the Joint Communication

EU responding to the changes taking place within its grounds as well as the Arctic region in the last 3 years – Coronavirus, US change of Government, China, Russia

EU willingness to get more engaged in the Arctic – from the 2016 wording of “should” we are now in the 2021 wording of “will”, we have the words gender equality – inclusivity- just transition actually written in the communication.

Clear commitment on carbon footprint – oil, coal and gas should stay in the ground.

Sami Council response: since 2019 – E U department – there is concern the E U supports extractive industries (minerals) mostly in Sami land.



EU CRITICAL RAW MATERIALS ACT

- An EU critical raw materials act for the future of EU supply chains.
- March 2024, the Council adopted the European critical raw materials act, as demand for rare earths is expected to increase exponentially in the coming years.
- The Act identifies a list of strategic raw materials, which are crucial to technologies important to Europe's green and digital ambitions and for defense and space applications, while being subject to potential supply risks in the future.
- The Regulation embeds both the critical and strategic raw materials lists in EU law.
- The Regulation sets clear benchmarks for domestic capacities along the strategic raw material supply chain and to diversify EU supply by 2030. The EU will cover:
 - At least 15% of the EU's annual consumption for recycling,
 - At least 10% of the EU's annual consumption for extraction,
 - At least 40% of the EU's annual consumption for processing,
- Not more than 65% of the Union's annual consumption of each strategic raw material at any relevant stage of processing from a single third country.
- The Act will reduce the administrative burden and simplify permitting procedures for critical raw materials projects in the EU. In addition, selected Strategic Projects will benefit from support for access to finance and shorter permitting timeframes (24 months for extraction permits and 12 months for processing and recycling permits). Member States will also have to develop national programs for exploring geological resources.

THE SAMI PERSPECTIVE

“As the Indigenous people in Europe, we deny all attempts of exploitation on our lands, waters and seas without our consent and safeguarding our culture, livelihoods and lifestyle. [...] We do remind that fulfilling with verdicts treaties, or other constructive arrangements, and the relationship based upon consultation and cooperation, are the basis for a trustworthy and lasting partnership between the Nordic States and the Sámi parliaments”

Critical Raw Materials Act: Sámi parliaments statements.

“Now the European Critical Raw Materials Act (CRMA) has been adopted by the EU. The act means a fast track for land exploitations and more mines. The law will lead to increased exploitation in Sápmi where the consequences of the CRMA and the designation of so-called strategic projects will have devastating consequences for the Sami people – for reindeer husbandry and all other traditional Sami livelihoods and Sami culture all over Sápmi.”



AMENDMENTS AFTER THE SAMI PARLIAMENTS INTERVENTION

- In September 2023, the European Parliament decided on some welcome amendments to the Commission's draft that aim to provide stronger social and environmental safeguards, complementing international standards such as due diligence norms under business and human rights law.
- Of interest to Indigenous Peoples is the proposed addition, in Annex 3 and referring to article 5.1, of a reference to the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and, especially, the right to give or withhold free, prior and informed consent (FPIC).
- Mining projects in Indigenous areas that wish to qualify as "strategic", and thus merit fast-tracking and financial support from the EU, would have to demonstrate that consent has been obtained.
- While this FPIC amendment is both welcome and necessary, it is also insufficient. In its present form the act – counter to stated policy objectives – is bound to fail in addressing already extensive mining impacts on Sámi lands and culture.

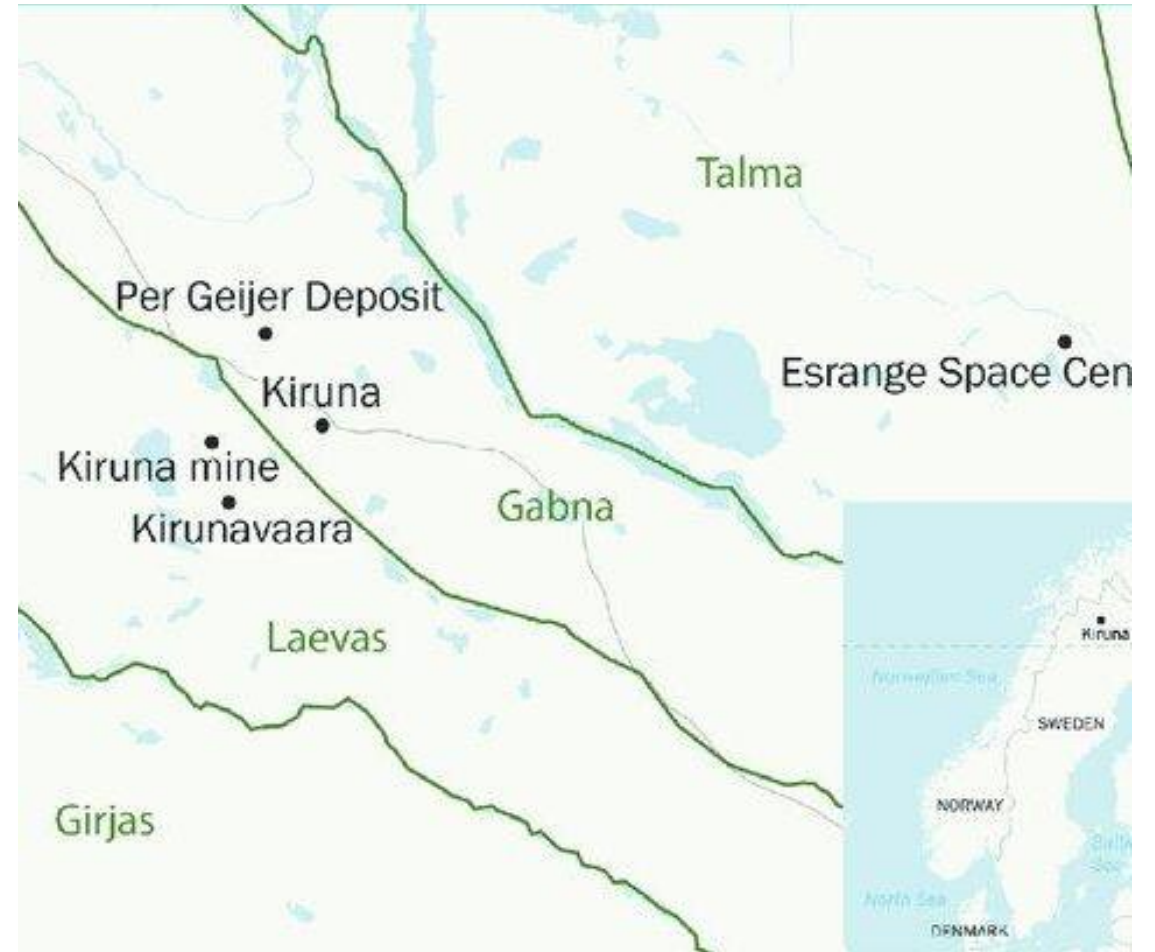


KIRUNA MINING VS REINDEER HERDING - HOW THE SAMI COMMUNITY IS PAYING THE PRICE OF THE GREEN TRANSITION. <https://youtu.be/ic1IJrh16GM?si=D8YKtn6yxjocvYDu>



RARE EARTH MINERALS DISCOVERY IN KIRUNA

- The discovery of rare earth minerals has been described as crucial to enable the green transition - but not everyone agrees.
- In January 2023, Swedish state-owned mining company LKAB discovered more than 1 million tonnes of rare earth minerals in Kiruna.
- These rare earth minerals are key components in everything from electric vehicle batteries to mobile phones to wind turbines. And the discovery of this deposit - just 30 kilometres from the Arctic circle - prompted a slew of celebratory headlines.
- Many see the newly found resources as a way of ending Europe's reliance on Russia and China for the rare earth minerals needed to fuel the green transition.
- Local Sámi communities are already affected by an existing Kiruna iron ore mine - and fear the new deposit discovery will threaten their traditional migration routes.
- Kiruna Municipality encompasses seven samebyar or Sámi communities: Könkämä, Saarivuoma, Lainiovuoma, Vittangi, Laevas, Gabna and Talma. A sameby is a geographical area where reindeer herding is carried out but also a kind of economic, administrative unit.



Map of the Kiruna region, including five Sami villages, portraying overlapping interests and stakeholders

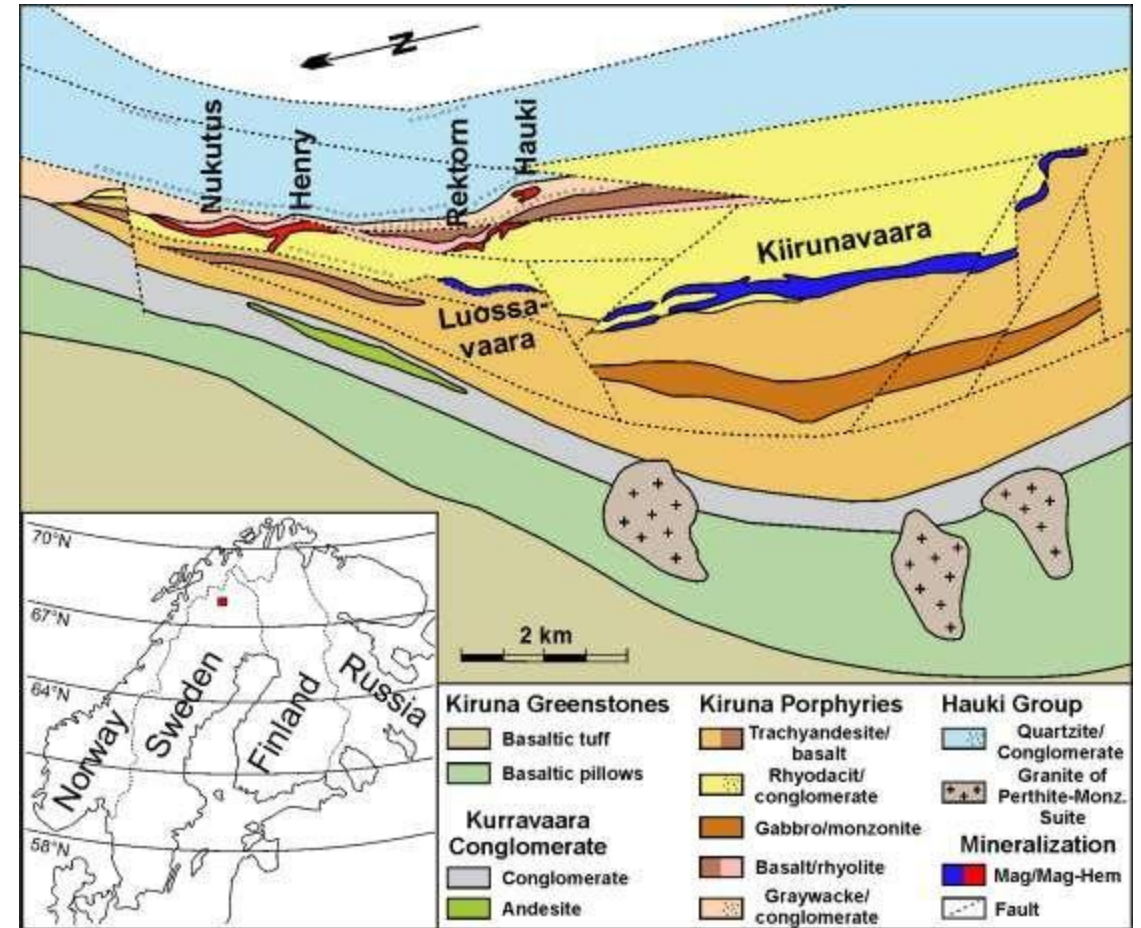
Source: Adapted by SIPRI from Sunesson, A., 'Karta över Sveriges samebyar' [Map of Sweden's Sami villages], Sametinget, 12 Apr. 2018.

TWO WORLDS...

"...The deposit is located in an area where the Sami village Gabna have an important migration route for their reindeers. We've had close dialogue the last years with Gabna as LKAB has been exploring the deposit both from the air and with extensive drilling from the ground. The goal for us has been to minimize the impact on the reindeer herding. We understand that Gabna now is concerned about the news of the size of the REE deposit.

However, since we have not decided on the mining method, it's not clear how big the impact might be. Also, an analysis of the impact, containing possible mitigation and compensation activities, is to be done.

This kind of analysis previously - in other projects - has been done by the Sami villages in the area affected with support from LKAB. We wish and hope that this is how it will be done concerning Per Geijer too."



Sketch map of the geology of the Kiruna area. Per Geijer deposits are marked in red. Geographical map shows the location of the Per Geijer deposits (modified after Sveriges Geologiska Undersökning, 1967).

TWO PERSPECTIVES.

- The mine and the town have left the Gabna Sameby with just a small strip of land, a few kilometres wide, for their reindeer herd to migrate through.
- Infrastructure for the industry cuts across their historic routes, with railways and roads crisscrossing the land.
- A 2023 statement by the Saami Council criticizes the decision to mine the deposit for its anticipated impact on reindeer herding in Gabna and Laevas, arguing that: 'The Saami lands are being disproportionately affected . . . [and] used to justify and greenwash the unsustainable consumption habits of the Western world.'
- It accuses LKAB of not informing the Gabna village in advance of the public announcement.



WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE? A PROPOSITION FROM THE ONES MOSTLY CONCERNED.

- **Incorporate an oversight mechanism at EU level**, mandating the Commission to receive grievances and ensure that safeguards are properly implemented, such as on FPIC. The draft act already notes an ambition to support third countries in reinforcing good governance – this should also be the case within the EU.
- **Add a provision in Annex 4**, clarifying that recognized certification schemes must include in their standards a firm adherence to the right of Indigenous Peoples to give or withhold FPIC, and that the certification standards themselves have obtained the free prior and informed consent of the representative bodies of the Indigenous Peoples where the scheme is intended to be used.
- **Integrate provisions on the creation of a funding mechanism for affected rights-holders.** One model could comprise of mining companies paying into a fund governed by the Commission. Here, affected social groups, such as the Sámi, should be eligible to apply for funds to cover their engagement in processes that – taken together – would be exhausting and last for long periods of time.

IMPROVING DATA COLLECTION AND DISSEMINATION RELATED TO WELLBEING AND LIVELIHOODS

The need for statistics on minority and ethnic groups is evident even within EU borders – in Sweden for example, information could be collected through Sweden’s survey on living conditions which examines a range of variables over time and which would facilitate comparative analysis between groups. However, absent legislative change, alternative strategies are needed.

Resources are needed to determine what is currently captured and known and by whom and to analyze how data from these sources could potentially be compiled in a comparable manner to develop a more robust picture of Sámi conditions

Increase research funding for Sámi data collection to create a harmonized state. Given the lack of official statistics on the Sámi in several regions, there is a particular need for research grants directed to fill this gap.

Develop ethical guidelines for EU research on the Sámi. Sámi research ethics guidelines should be developed and should be structured to facilitate comparative research across the four countries encompassing Sápmi.

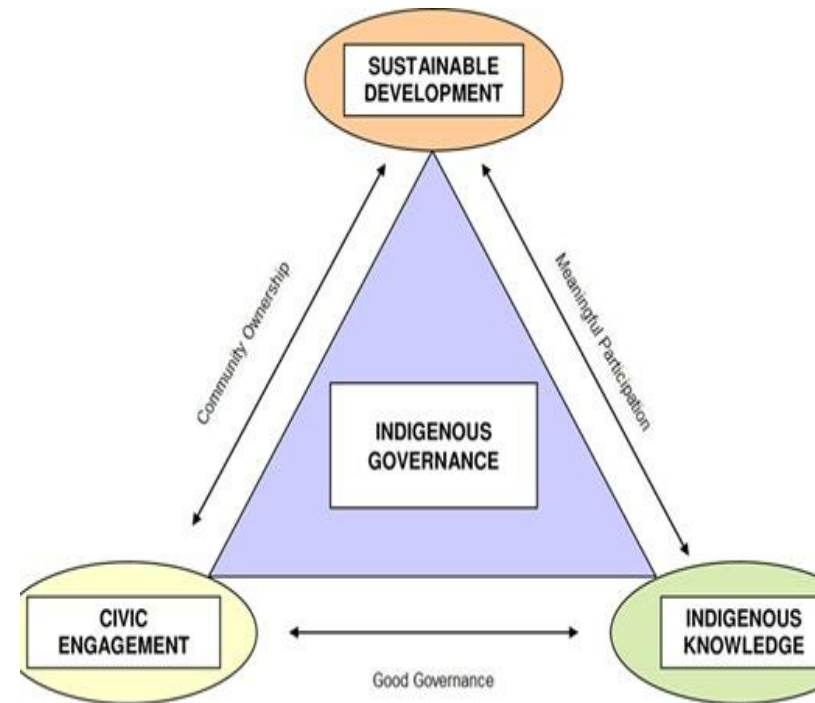
WHAT LIES AHEAD FOR THIS RESEARCH

Sámi, Nordic and European Union flags in front of the European Parliament logo during the Summit of Barents Euro-Arctic Indigenous Sámi People in 2023.

- The overarching objective of this research is to provide an integrated understanding of the **interplay between Indigenous Peoples and EU policies in the strategic region of the Arctic.**
- Two more Case Studies: EU's Biodiversity Strategy 2030 – EU Common Fisheries Policy
- Identification of what the Sámi themselves are pushing for: Greater inclusion in policy discussions, recognition of traditional rights and practices, Better mechanisms for integrating indigenous knowledge



RESILIENCE - LOOKING FOR THE MISSING COMMUNICATION LINK



Thank you for your attention!

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